

## **2.10 NATURAL RESOURCES**

### **2.10.1 Affected Environment**

The original siting of the White House was determined with consideration of local topography and hydrology. The present location is on a terrace with a relatively higher elevation than the surrounding area; this higher elevation also reduces the effect of flooding from the adjacent Potomac River.

#### **2.10.1.1 Geology and Soils**

The District of Columbia lies along the fall line at the geologic boundary between the Atlantic Coastal Plain and Piedmont Plateau. The downtown area of Washington is on the nearly level lowlands of the Coastal Plain, of which this part is underlain by poorly consolidated sediment. The area surrounding the White House is underlain either by river terrace deposits, for most proximate areas north of the Ellipse, or by alluvium and artificial fill, for most proximate areas south of the Ellipse. These deposits are generally composed of gravel, sand, silt, and clay of the lowest stream terraces and bottoms.

The Soil Conservation Service (now renamed the Natural Resource Conservation Service) identified the soils of the area surrounding the White House as being either of the Urban Land-Beltsville-Chillum association or of the Lafayette Park and the adjacent north area of the Udorthents association.

#### **2.10.1.2 Vegetation**

Vegetation in this area has been heavily manipulated to establish and define an appropriate setting for the White House, the Mall, the Ellipse, and the surrounding area. Vegetation species that have been identified for planting were selected for aesthetic reasons but were also selected to provide some form of climate control and some measure of privacy.

Typical of the vegetation in this area, the predominant vegetation consists of designated plantings of mixed deciduous shade and canopy trees. This area also contains deciduous ornamental trees, foundation plantings of evergreen and deciduous shrubs, and ground covers, such as lawn grass.

#### **2.10.1.3 Wildlife**

Gray squirrels are abundant throughout the city, and are the most visible diurnal mammal. In parklands and other open space areas, raccoon and opossum are common nocturnal species that often invade the residential communities in search of food. Numerous additional small mammals, including cottontail rabbits, muskrat, native rodents, and bats, can be found in many locations where appropriate habitat or food is available. The parklands and open-space areas also support a wide variety of terrestrial birds, including the seemingly ubiquitous pigeons and doves.

#### 2.10.1.4 Threatened or Endangered Species

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. Sections 1531-1544) requires that federal agencies consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to ensure that any action authorized, funded, or carried out by that federal agency does not jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat of such species. Specifically, Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act requires that the federal agency proposing the action contact the FWS or the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for an official list of endangered, threatened, and proposed species that may be present in the area of a proposed project.

Coordination with representatives of the FWS has occurred regarding this security action. Except for occasional transient individual animals, no federally listed or proposed threatened or endangered species are known to exist in the area of the security action. The FWS expressed no concerns regarding this action.

#### **2.10.2 Impacts Analysis**

Because the security action does not involve any ground disturbance, it does not impact either the geology or the soils of this area. The security action does not involve any removal of vegetation. It does not, therefore, negatively impact any vegetation in the area. The security action does not involve any ground disturbance nor any removal of vegetation. It will not impact any wildlife or their habitat in the area of the security action. The species of terrestrial wildlife, including birds, within the area of the action are very adapted to living in this highly urbanized area. Because there are no known threatened or endangered species within the area of the security action, no involvement with any proposed or listed threatened or endangered species, nor their designated critical habitat, would occur as a result of the security action.